

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1-30 are pending in this application. By this amendment claims 1 and 29 have been amended. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The applicant's invention provides a method for modifying synthesized speech where run-time control parameters are modified based on an acoustic input signal. This acoustic input signal characterizes intelligibility of the synthesized speech. In effect, the acoustic input signal reflects how the synthesized speech *sounds* in the use environment and is used as a feedback signal, for example, to modify the run-time control parameters.

The Examiner has cited the Mizuno reference against all pending claims, either under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) or § 103 in combination with other references. Mizuno is concerned with controlling the prosody of synthesized speech. Referring to Mizuno Figure 2, the input text S1 is separated into text and prosodic feature control commands at S3, so that these separate components may be operated upon differently, as at S4 and S5, before being recombined at S6 and used to generate synthesized speech at S7.

The Mizuno process thus operates within the domain of the text and prosodic feature control command information. Mizuno does not utilize an acoustic input signal to modify parameters. In this respect, Mizuno is quite different from the applicant's invention.

Accordingly, in order to more fully distinguish the applicant's invention from the cited art, claim 1 has been amended to recite an acoustic input signal. It is respectfully

submitted that the Mizuno reference does not teach or suggest this improvement and thus claim 1 now fully distinguishes over the cited reference.

In another respect, the applicant's invention utilizes predetermined interference models that characterize background noise contained in an environment in which the speech is reproduced. These models are used in generating real-time data that are, in turn, used to modify the run-time control parameters. In this way, interference between the background noise and the speech is reduced.

The Examiner has cited Mizuno in combination with Graciotti in rejecting applicant's claim s 29 and 30. Mizuno has been discussed above. Graciotti adds a teaching of adjusting the volume of the signal, which the Examiner notes would have the effect of increasing intelligibility for listeners. Applicant respectfully notes that increasing volume will not always increase intelligibility. In some instances, increasing volume will cause distortion which can actually *decrease* intelligibility.

However, whether increasing volume will improve intelligibility or not, neither Mizuno nor Graciotti employ predetermined interference models as a component in their solution to reduce the interference between background noise and speech.

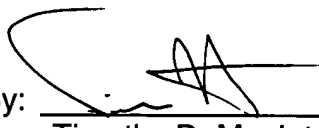
Therefore, in order to more fully distinguish the applicant's invention, claim 29 has been amended to recite applicant's predetermined interference models. It is respectfully submitted that claim 29 now fully distinguishes over the art of record.

In view of the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that this application is now in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, allowance is courteously solicited at this time. The Examiner will please note that on the Office Action Summary sheet, box 10 has been marked with an "X" but there is no indication whether the drawings filed on

3/8/2001 are (a) accepted or b) objected to. Applicant believes that the drawings are in good order and that the Examiner therefore must have intended to check box (a), indicating that the drawings were acceptable. If this assumption is not correct, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned at 248-641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:   
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